

fully to suggest, to the Legislature, the propriety of repealing or modifying the law of 1845, chap. 340, respecting the punishment of slaves and their confinement in the Penitentiary of the State. I am fully convinced, that the discretion which was vested in the courts of law, before the passage of that act, touching the sale and transportation beyond the limits of the State of slaves convicted of the lower grades of felonies, was well bestowed, and that a similar discretion vested in the circuit courts now, would be exercised with benefit to the State, and would relieve the Penitentiary of a large class of convicts not reformatively by our prison discipline, and whose confinement in the prison in such numbers, seems to be attended with such unprofitable results.

CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS.

House of Refuge.—Among the public institutions worthy of the especial notice of the Legislature, “the House of Refuge for Juvenile Delinquents” holds a prominent place. Although its original charter dates back as far as 1831, it was only in December, 1855, that this true Reform School was fully inaugurated in Maryland.

It is mainly due to the liberal contributions of private citizens of Baltimore, with the generous aid of the municipal government of that city, that the great work which now reflects so much credit upon our State, was accomplished. Having visited the institution, I can speak from personal observation, and cannot refrain from expressing my astonishment at the magnitude, and substantial character of the building, as well as the moral courage which emboldened the Board of Managers, to engage in the erection of so noble a structure; and the perseverance, which, through many obstacles, enabled them to complete and put it into successful operation, and all this at a cost, which evidences a most economical financial management. At its last session the Legislature made an appropriation for the *support* of this institution, to be paid in five yearly instalments. The amount thus wisely given for this beneficent purpose was less indeed than was asked for, but was gratefully accepted, as initiatory, it was hoped, to a larger acknowledgment of the deserved claims of the institution.

At that time, which was only a few months after its opening, there were about thirty inmates. There are now as reported to me on the first of November, 199 inmates; 175 boys and 24 girls, and besides this number under actual care there have been apprenticed to worthy citizens in this and other States, 36 boys and 11 girls, and discharged to the care of parents and friends, 37 boys and 20 girls, making a total of inmates since the institution commenced operation, (now little less than two years) of three hundred and four.

The annual report of the Managers for 1856 was duly made